

The President's Weekly Address

December 18, 2010

This week, Congress passed—and I signed into law—an essential economic package that will help grow our economy, spur businesses, and jump-start job creation.

Instead of a New Year's Day tax hike on the vast majority of Americans, 2 million Americans who've lost their jobs through no fault of their own will now know with certainty that they won't lose their emergency unemployment insurance at the end of the month. Eight million college students who'd otherwise face a tuition hike next semester will continue having access to the American opportunity tax credit. Twelve million families with 24 million children will benefit from extensions of the earned income tax credit and child tax credit. And millions of entrepreneurs who've been waiting to invest in their businesses will receive new tax incentives to help them expand, buy new equipment, or make upgrades, freeing up money to hire new workers.

This package, which is so important for our economy at this pivotal time, was the product of hard negotiations. And like any negotiations, there was give and take on both sides. But I'm heartened by our ability to come together to do what's best for middle class families across this country and for our economy as a whole.

Before going away for the holiday break, I'm hopeful we can also come together on another urgent national priority, and that is the new START Treaty that will reduce the world's nuclear arsenals and make America more secure. Twenty-five years ago, the Soviet Union and United States each had about 25,000 nuclear weapons. In the decades since, that number has been reduced by over 70 percent, and we've had onsite inspections of Russian nuclear facilities. That progress would not have been possible without strategic arms control treaties.

During the past year, however, our old treaty with Russia expired, and without a new one, we won't be able to verify Russia's nuclear arsenal, which would undercut President Reagan's call to trust, but verify, when it comes to nuclear weapons. Without a new treaty, we'll risk turning back the progress we've made in our relationship with Russia, which is essential to enforce strong sanctions against Iran, secure vulnerable nuclear materials from terrorists, and resupply our troops in Afghanistan. And we'll risk undermining American leadership not only on nuclear proliferation, but a host of other challenges around the world.

Ratifying a treaty like START isn't about winning a victory for an administration or a political party, it's about the safety and security of the United States of America. That's why this treaty is supported by both Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. That's why it's supported by every living Republican Secretary of State, by our NATO allies, and the leadership of the United States military. Indeed, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hoss Cartwright, said this week that the military needs this treaty, and they need it badly. And that's why every President since Ronald Reagan has pursued a treaty like START, and every one that has been reviewed by the Senate has passed with strong bipartisan support.

We have taken the time to get this right. The START Treaty has now been under review by the Senate for over 7 months. It's gone through 18 hearings. Nearly 1,000 questions have been asked and answered. Several Republican Senators have come out in support of

ratification. Meanwhile, further delay comes at a cost. Every minute we drag our feet is a minute that we have no inspectors on the ground at those Russian nuclear sites.

It's time to get this done. It's time to show the same spirit of common purpose on our security that we showed this week on our economy. It's time to remember the old saying that politics stops at the water's edge. That saying was coined by a Republican Senator, Arthur Vandenberg, who partnered with a Democratic President, Harry Truman, to pass landmark national security measures at the dawn of the cold war. Today, over 60 years later, when we're threatened not only by nuclear weapons, but an array of other dangers, that's a principle we must continue to uphold.

Thanks, and have a nice weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on December 17 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on December 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 18.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks :: Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bush, George H. W.; Cartwright, James E.; Clinton, William J.

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